



### PHASE TWO: VISION

The second phase in the Strategic Master Plan planning process is the Vision Phase. Once the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department systems and operations are researched and the key issues and findings are identified, summary statements are written that describe the observations and findings for each researched area. Key findings are developed and various strategies, policies, and actions are offered as possible solutions to address shortcomings and weaknesses in the system and organization. The first Step of the Vision Phase is the creation of the Vision Statement, which serves as a catalyst and guide for the creation of the recommendations. Through a series of visioning sessions, the consulting team and department staff created the recommendations that can be implemented to improve the system in the future. The *Community Values Model* was created along with key value statements and goals to serve as the main catalyst for achievements over the next ten years.

The staff and consulting team held a vision workshop to analyze all findings and observation reports. From this information workshop a new vision was developed to guide the organization for the future. The vision statement states what the Department wants to be known for, is as follows:

“The City of Alexandria will provide Recreational services of the highest quality to our citizens. We will create safe and desirable environments in all our parks and recreation facilities through high levels of maintenance and services. Our programs and facilities will meet the needs of our diverse population and enhance our citizens’ quality of life. We will help define the community by being responsible for the protection and enhancement of the City’s natural resources and open spaces.”

Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department mission is to support the vision through the following mission statement.

Our Mission is to be a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity through the development of effective and efficient recreation programs, facilities and parks for all citizens and visitors to enjoy.”

Attractive parks and open space play a role in attracting businesses to Alexandria. Parks and recreation services help to create a positive economic market through attracting people to live in the city and come to the many special events provided by the city. The Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department has worked very hard over the last 10 years to make parks and recreation services a central part of quality of life for all citizens. Recreation programs have been expanded over the years, but the lack of parkland and facilities is the key issue that the department has struggled with in meeting community needs.

Growing popularity and demand for parks and recreational opportunities has been consistent with the growth of the city especially as it applies to youth and young adults. The need for more park facilities is a common theme in Alexandria. Numerous community issues regarding the need for open space, additional neighborhood parks and recreation facilities have been identified through the Needs Assessment Study and transformed into the Strategic Master Plan.

## Vision Statement

The Strategic Master Plan will require resources and staff energy to fulfill all the goals and recommendations. However, the parks and recreation needs are not all the responsibility of the public sector. The private sector needs to acknowledge their role in providing more parks in high density housing areas and assist the city in developing and integrated multi-use path system.

Associated with the development of the vision, the consulting team evaluated the demographics of Alexandria and conducted a benchmark analysis that compared Alexandria to five other cities of comparable size and demographics. These two analysis reports help to shape the *Community Values Model* for the department.

The *Community Values Model* was developed to create the framework or organization of a Strategic Master Plan that is customized to Alexandria and founded in community values. Using this framework, goals, strategies, and actions are defined to fulfill the respective community value. The Strategic Master Plan takes form as a Vision Strategy Matrix, which allows the staff to incorporate results and demonstrate to the key leadership the outcomes of their work. This matrix will serve as a living document and strategy implementation tool for the length of the Strategic Master Plan.

There were five community values identified. Those community values recognize what the city must address in managing open space, parks and recreation services.

These include knowing and implementing the community mandates for open space, parks and recreation facilities.

The city must establish standards of care for parks, recreation facilities, and program services. These standards should be adequately funded.

The city needs to develop tiered levels of parks and recreation programs to meet the needs of all citizens and create lifetime users.

The city needs to establish new sources of revenue to help offset operational costs and capital costs.

The city needs to create effective partnerships with public partners such as schools, not-for-profit, and private partners in the delivery of services and facilities.

The *Community Values Model* for Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department creates a balanced, sustainable approach to guide decisions and allocation of resources. Within this *Community Values Model*, a clear definition of community mandates is provided; allowing the departments to more effectively manage its resources. Consistent standards are established so that a baseline of services and quality exists throughout the system. Tiered facilities and programs allow for the development of lifetime users and to increase capacity of users. With a baseline established, appropriate resources can be applied to developing new sources of funding, including facilities and programs that are sustainable through self-generated revenue to offset and /or recover operating and maintenance costs. Equitable partnerships provide the ability to leverage the city's investment and resources to help deliver park facilities and program services at all levels.

## **Vision Statement**

The growing popularity and demand for parks and recreational opportunities are in proportion to the constant growth and development in Alexandria. The need for more open space, parks, recreational facilities, and programs has been identified. To address these issues, goals, vision statements and recommendations have been identified and outlined in the vision matrix found in this report on pages 47-70.